

Section 13: On-Road Driving Test

This Section Covers

- ✓ Scoring For The On-Road Driving Test

You will be required to demonstrate your ability to drive safely over a predetermined route containing a variety of traffic situations. At all times during the driving test, you must operate your vehicle in a safe and responsible manner according to the current regulatory, traffic, and weather conditions on your route.

During the driving test, the examiner will be observing and scoring you on specific maneuvers as well as on your general driving behavior. You will be expected to drive straight ahead and stay in the far right lane unless given instructions to turn or to perform other maneuvers. The examiner will give directions for each maneuver as far in advance as possible and will not ask you to do anything illegal or unsafe.

If your test route does not have certain traffic situations, you may be asked to simulate a traffic situation. You will do this by demonstrating or telling the examiner what you are or would be doing if you were in that traffic situation.

Following are the requirements for specific maneuvers and general driving behaviors that will be evaluated during the driving test. The passing score for the driving segment is (25) or fewer errors.

13.1 How You Will Be Tested

Turns

You have been asked to make a turn:

- ✓ Check traffic in all directions by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ Use turn signals and safely get into the lane needed for the turn.

As you approach the turn:

- ✓ Use turn signals to warn others of your turn.
- ✓ Slow down smoothly, change gears as needed to keep power, but do not coast unsafely. Unsafe coasting occurs when your vehicle is out of gear (clutch depressed or gearshift in neutral) for more than the length of your vehicle.

If you must stop before making the turn:

- ✓ Come to a smooth stop without skidding.
- ✓ Come to a complete stop behind the stop line, crosswalk, sidewalk or stop sign.
- ✓ If stopping behind another vehicle, stop at a safe distance where you can see, at a minimum, the rear tires on the vehicle ahead of you (safe gap).
- ✓ Do not let your vehicle roll.
- ✓ Keep the front wheels aimed straight ahead.

When ready to turn:

- ✓ Check traffic in all directions by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ Keep both hands on the steering wheel during the turn.
- ✓ Try not to change gears during the turn.
- ✓ Keep checking mirrors to make sure the vehicle does not hit anything on the inside of the turn.
- ✓ Vehicle should not move into oncoming traffic.
- ✓ Yield to any traffic or pedestrians in the intersection.
- ✓ When turning left from a single left-turn lane, your vehicle should finish the turn in the lane which is **directly** to the right of the center line.
- ✓ When turning right, your vehicle should finish the turn in the right-most (curb) lane.

After turn:

- ✓ Immediately check traffic in all directions by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ Make sure turn signal is off.
- ✓ Get up to speed of traffic, use turn signal, and move into right-most lane when safe to do so.

Intersections

As you approach an intersection:

- ✓ Check traffic thoroughly in all directions by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ Decelerate gently.
- ✓ Brake smoothly and, if necessary, change gears.
- ✓ If necessary, come to a complete stop (no coasting) behind any stop signs, signals, sidewalks, or stop lines, maintaining a safe gap behind any vehicle in front of you.
- ✓ Your vehicle must not roll forward or backward.

When driving through an intersection:

- ✓ Check traffic thoroughly in all directions by moving your head.
- ✓ Decelerate and yield to any pedestrians and traffic in the intersection.
- ✓ **Do not** change lanes and try not to shift gears while proceeding through the intersection.
- ✓ Keep your hands on the wheel.

Once through the intersection:

- ✓ Continue checking traffic by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ Accelerate smoothly and change gears as necessary.

Urban/Rural Straight

During this part of the test, you are expected to make regular traffic checks by looking in your mirrors and moving your head. Always maintain a safe following distance. Your vehicle should be centered in the proper lane (right-most lane) and you should keep up with the flow of traffic but **not exceed** the posted speed limit.

Urban/Rural Lane Changes

During the multiple lane portion of the urban and rural sections, you will be asked to change lanes to the left, and then back to the right. You should make the necessary traffic checks first by looking in your mirrors and moving your head, then use proper signals and smoothly change lanes when safe to do so.

Expressway

Before entering the expressway:

- ✓ Check traffic by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ Use proper signals.
- ✓ Merge smoothly into the proper lane of traffic. Stay within lane markings.

Once on the expressway:

- ✓ Maintain proper lane positioning, vehicle spacing, and vehicle speed.
- ✓ Continue to check traffic thoroughly in all directions by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.

You will be instructed to change lanes to the left, and then back to the right:

- ✓ You must make necessary traffic checks by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ Use proper signals.
- ✓ Change lanes smoothly when it is safe to do so.

When exiting the expressway:

- ✓ Make necessary traffic checks by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ Use proper signals.
- ✓ Decelerate smoothly, brake evenly and change gears as necessary in the exit lane. Do not coast.
- ✓ Once on the exit ramp, you must continue to decelerate within the lane markings, and maintain adequate spacing between your vehicle and other vehicles.

Stop/Start

For this maneuver, you will be asked to pull your vehicle over to the side of the road and stop as if you were going to get out and check something on your vehicle. You must check traffic thoroughly in all directions, use your turn signal, and move to the right-most lane or shoulder of road.

As you prepare for the stop:

- ✓ Check traffic by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ Activate your right turn signal.
- ✓ Decelerate smoothly, brake evenly, change gears as necessary.
- ✓ Bring your vehicle to a full stop without coasting, leaving your foot brake applied and clutch pedal down.

Once stopped:

- ✓ Vehicle must be parallel to the curb or shoulder of the road and safely out of the traffic flow.
- ✓ Vehicle should not be blocking driveways, fire hydrants, intersections, signs, etc. Do not park in areas of limited sight distance (curves, hills, etc.).

- ✓ Cancel your turn signal.
- ✓ Activate your 4-way emergency flashers.
- ✓ Move the gear shift to neutral or park.
- ✓ Apply the parking brake.
- ✓ Remove your feet from the brake and clutch pedals.

When instructed to resume:

- ✓ Check traffic and your mirrors thoroughly in all directions before moving your vehicle.
- ✓ Turn off you 4-way flashers.
- ✓ Activate the left turn signal.
- ✓ When traffic permits, you should release the parking brake and pull straight ahead.
- ✓ Do not turn the wheel before your vehicle moves.
- ✓ Check traffic again from all directions, especially to the left, by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ Steer and accelerate smoothly into the proper (right-most) lane when safe to do so.
- ✓ Once your vehicle is back into the flow of traffic, cancel your left turn signal.

Curve

When approaching a curve:

- ✓ Check traffic thoroughly in all directions by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ Before entering the curve, reduce speed so further braking or shifting is not required in the curve.
- ✓ Keep vehicle in the lane.
- ✓ Continue checking traffic in all directions.

Upgrade (Verbal Simulation)

As you **approach** the upgrade:

- ✓ Select the proper gear to maintain speed and not lug or race the engine.
- ✓ Check traffic thoroughly in all directions and move to the right-most or curb lane.
- ✓ Use 4-way flashers if traveling too slowly for the flow of traffic.

Downgrade (Verbal Simulation)

Before starting down the grade:

- ✓ Downshift as needed to help control engine speed and road speed.
- ✓ Test brakes by gently applying the foot brake to ensure they are functioning properly.
- ✓ As vehicle moves down the grade, continue checking traffic in all directions and stay in the right-most or curb lane.
- ✓ Use 4-way flashers if vehicle is moving too slowly for traffic.
- ✓ Increase following distance and observe the following downhill braking procedures:
 - Select a “safe” speed, one that is not too fast for the weight of the vehicle, length and steepness of the grade, weather and road conditions.

- Once a “safe” speed has been reached, apply the brake hard enough to feel a definite slowdown.
- When speed has been reduced to 5 mph below the “safe” speed, release the brakes. This application should last about three [3] seconds.
- Once speed has increased to the “safe” speed, repeat the procedure.

For example, if your “safe” speed is 40 mph, you should apply the brakes once your vehicle speed reaches 40 mph. Your brakes should be applied hard enough to reduce your speed to 35 mph. Once your vehicle speed reaches 35 mph, release your brakes. Repeat this procedure as often as necessary until you have reached the end of the downgrade. **This braking technique is called “snubbing.”**

When operating any commercial vehicle, **do not** ride the clutch, race the engine, change gears, or coast while driving down the grade. At the bottom of the grade, be sure to cancel your 4-way flashers.

You will be asked to simulate (verbally) driving up and down a steep hill. Therefore, you must be familiar with the upgrade/downgrade procedures so that you can explain and/or demonstrate them to the examiner at any time during the driving test.

Railroad Crossing

Before reaching the crossing, **all** commercial vehicle drivers should:

- ✓ Decelerate, brake smoothly, and shift gears as necessary.
- ✓ Look and listen for the presence of trains.
- ✓ Check traffic in all directions by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ **Do not** stop, change gears, pass another vehicle or change lanes while any part of your vehicle is in the crossing.

For drivers operating a school bus, or placarded vehicle for the test — You must be prepared to demonstrate the following railroad crossing stopping procedures at every railroad crossing on the driving test route.

For drivers operating a bus other than a school bus for the test — at one (1) railroad crossing, you will be asked to simulate and/or explain the following railroad crossing stopping procedures for school buses.

For drivers operating a non-placarded truck for the test but applying for the H-hazardous materials endorsement — at one (1) railroad crossing, you will be asked to simulate and/or explain the following railroad crossing stopping procedures for placarded vehicles.

- ✓ As the vehicle approaches a railroad crossing, activate the 4-way flashers.
- ✓ Stop the vehicle within 50 feet but not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail.
- ✓ Listen and look in both directions along the track for an approaching train and for signals indicating the approach of a train.
- ✓ **School bus drivers must also open the passenger door and driver-side window, turn OFF all interior switches (including fans, heaters, and radios) to look and listen properly for the presence of trains.**
- ✓ Keep both hands on the steering wheel as the vehicle crosses the tracks.
- ✓ Do not stop, change gears, or change lanes while any part of your vehicle is over the tracks.
- ✓ 4-way flashers should be deactivated after the vehicle crosses the tracks.

Not all driving road test routes will have a railroad crossing. You may be asked to explain and demonstrate the proper railroad crossing procedures to the examiner at a simulated location.

Bridge/Overpass/Sign

After driving under an overpass, you may be asked to tell the examiner what the posted clearance was. After going over a bridge, you may be asked to tell the examiner what the posted weight limit was. If your test route does not have a bridge or overpass, you may be asked about another traffic sign. When asked, be prepared to identify and explain to the examiner any traffic sign which may appear on the route.

Off-road Simulated Student Stop (School Bus Only)

According to Michigan law (Public Act 187 of 1990), school bus drivers are not allowed to activate the alternately flashing lights when operating a school bus on a public highway or private road while transporting passengers primarily other than school pupils. Therefore school bus drivers will be asked to simulate a student pick-up at an off-road location.

As you approach the designated student pick-up location:

- ✓ Check traffic in all directions by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ Decelerate smoothly and gently apply the service brake to warn motorists of your impending stop.
- ✓ You **must** activate the appropriate signals as required not less than 200 feet from the designated stop (with the 4-light system, activate the alternately flashing red lights; with the eight light system activate the alternately flashing amber lights). **Note: Failure to perform this portion of the Student Stop exercise will result in an automatic failure of the driving test.**
- ✓ Activate your right turn signal after the alternately flashing lights (red or amber) are on.
- ✓ Stop your vehicle as far to the right as possible (without obstructing the normal flow of traffic) and bring your vehicle to a full stop.

Once stopped:

- ✓ You **must** apply the parking brake and shift to neutral or park. **Note: Failure to perform this portion of the Student Stop exercise will result in an automatic failure of the driving test.**
- ✓ Cancel your right turn signal and open the passenger door when it is safe to do so.
- ✓ With the 8-light system, the alternately flashing red lights activate, and if equipped, the stop arm fully extends when the passenger door is opened.
- ✓ Check traffic in all directions and make sure that all entering pupils are safely seated and that all exiting pupils are safely clear of the vehicle by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ Once you have accounted for all of the entering and exiting pupils, cancel all of your signals and wait for traffic to clear, (traffic dispersal).

Before you resume:

- ✓ Check traffic in all directions by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- ✓ Activate your left turn signal.
- ✓ When it is safe to do so, merge smoothly into traffic and cancel your turn signal .

General Driving Behavior

During the driving test, you must:

- ✓ Wear your safety belt.
- ✓ Obey all traffic signs, signals, and laws and drive with due care according to the current traffic and weather conditions.

- ✓ Complete the test without an accident or moving violation.

You will be scored on your overall performance in the following general driving behavior categories:

Clutch Usage

- ✓ If equipped, always use the clutch to shift. Use the double-clutch technique if the vehicle is equipped with a nonsynchronized transmission.
- ✓ Do not rev or lug the engine.
- ✓ Do not ride the clutch to control speed or coast with the clutch depressed.
- ✓ Do not “pop” the clutch.

Gear Usage

- ✓ Do not grind or clash the gears.
- ✓ Do not coast with the gear shift lever in neutral.
- ✓ Select the gear that does not rev or lug the engine.
- ✓ Do not shift in turns and intersections.
- ✓ Be familiar with and verbalize the proper gear technique for driving up and down steep grades. (Refer to Upgrade/Downgrade procedures in this section.)

Brake Usage

- ✓ Do not ride or pump brake. Do not brake harshly. On normal surfaces (level ground), use a light steady brake pressure.
- ✓ Be familiar with and verbalize the “snub braking” technique while driving down steep grades. (Refer to Upgrade/Downgrade procedures in this section.)
- ✓ Be familiar with and demonstrate the proper parking brake procedures during an emergency stop or school bus student stop. (Refer to the Stop/Start and Off-road Simulated Student Stop procedures.)

Steering Technique

- ✓ While driving, keep both hands on the steering wheel.
- ✓ Do not palm the steering wheel or over/under steer the vehicle.
- ✓ Do not let the steering wheel slide freely through hands upon completing a turn.
- ✓ Keep the wheel straight while stopped prior to turning.

Traffic Checks/Search

- ✓ Use all available mirrors and maintain awareness of the entire traffic environment. **Regularly** check surrounding traffic conditions with **head/body movements** to the left and right.
- ✓ Always check traffic **before** using turn signals, changing lanes, or performing any maneuver.
- ✓ Be able to identify any traffic sign, bridge weight, or overpass clearance when asked by the examiner.

Vehicle Spacing

- ✓ When following another vehicle, try to maintain a safe and legal following distance. You must allow, at a minimum, one second per 10 feet of vehicle length when traveling under 40 mph. (Add one second for speeds over 40 mph.)

- ✓ When stopping behind another vehicle, you must be able to see, at a minimum, the rear wheels of the vehicle in front of you (safe gap).
- ✓ Be prepared to yield to pedestrians and traffic already at or in the intersection.
- ✓ You must maintain proper spacing when changing lanes or during the expressway merge/exit.
- ✓ When parked during the Stop/Start exercise, do not position the vehicle in an area with limited sight distance (curves, hills, etc.)
- ✓ When parked during the Stop/Start exercise, do not block road signs, driveways, fire hydrants, and other vehicles, etc.

Speed/Throttle Control

- ✓ Always maintain steady and even speed control when accelerating and decelerating. Minimize disrupting traffic by keeping up with traffic flow, but never exceed the regulatory speed limit.
- ✓ Do not drive too fast in or near intersections or during turns and curves.
- ✓ Adjust your speed according to the traffic and weather conditions on your route.

Lane Usage

- ✓ Do not put vehicle over curbs, sidewalks, or lane markings.
- ✓ If required to stop, come to a complete stop behind stop signs, crosswalks, signals, sidewalks, or stop lines.
- ✓ On a multiple lane road, the vehicle should complete the turn in the proper lane. When turning left, the vehicle should complete the turn in the lane directly to the right of the center line. When turning right, the vehicle should complete the turn in the right-most (curb) lane.
- ✓ After completing the turn in the correct lane, the vehicle should move to (or remain in) the right-most lane unless obstructed by tree limbs, utility poles, etc.
- ✓ Be familiar with and verbalize proper lane position for steep grades (Refer to Upgrade/Downgrade procedures in this section).

Signal Usage

- ✓ Always use turn signals properly when turning and changing lanes (not too early or too late).
- ✓ Use 4-way flashers during the Stop/Start, Upgrade/Downgrade and Railroad Crossing maneuvers as required.
- ✓ Use alternately flashing lights on school bus during Student Stop exercise as required.
- ✓ Do not forget to cancel signals.

Obedience to Signs, Signals, and Laws

- ✓ Driver must obey all signs, signals, and laws throughout the entire CDL skills tests. Failure to do so may result in an automatic failure of the CDL skills tests.

Safety Belt Usage

- ✓ From the time the vehicle begins to move, the driver must use a safety belt in a safe and legal manner.